

# [***Joe Biden's Approval Rating Has Catastrophically Fallen Over Israel***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BR9-C041-DY68-10C8-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** As the six-month anniversary of the Gaza war approaches, polling for Newsweek shows the president is facing backlash.

**Body**

President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) was quick to show solidarity with Israel after the October 7 [*Hamas*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hamas?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) attacks, but six months on, American voters have become increasingly unhappy with his handling of the Gaza crisis, according to polling for *Newsweek*.

In the aftermath of the attacks by militants in which over 1,200 were killed and 253 were taken hostage, Biden stood next to Prime Minister [*Benjamin Netanyahu*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/benjamin-netanyahu?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and said that his country is "not alone."

However, three surveys conducted exclusively for *Newsweek* by [*Redfield & Wilton Strategies*](https://redfieldandwiltonstrategies.com/) since then have shown that U.S. voters' disapproval of Biden's actions in the crisis has sharpened intensely since December.

One Middle East and U.S. foreign policy expert told *Newsweek* that the Israel issue could be "very difficult for him to explain to his base" on the presidential campaign trail. Another American political analyst, however, said it would not make much difference for Biden come November, with other issues at the forefront of voters' minds.

**Biden's Positive Start**

The first survey of 1,500 eligible U.S. voters from across the country was conducted on October 29, 11 days after Biden's full-throated pledge of support in Tel Aviv.

The poll, with a 2.53 percent margin of error, showed the overall approval rating of U.S. voters for the president's handling of the situation in Israel was plus 2 percentage points.

This was the difference between 37 percent of those who approved of his actions, compared with 35 percent who disapproved.

A poll of the same number of voters on December 8, with the same margin of error, found that Biden's approval rating on Israel had increased to 6 percent—with 39 percent approving, compared with 33 percent who disapproved.

But much has happened since then. Israel's bombardment of Gaza following the Hamas attacks has killed at least 33,000 Palestinians, according to the Hamas-run health authorities in the territory, cited by the Associated Press on April 5. Gaza's entire population faces hunger, according to the U.N.

U.S. officials haven't blocked military aid to Israel. *The Washington Post* reported last week that the U.S. had authorized the transfer of 1,800 MK-84 2,000-pound bombs and other weaponry to the country.

I[*n his State of the Union speech*](https://www.newsweek.com/bidens-words-gaza-are-getting-better-his-actions-matter-more-opinion-1881587?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), Biden announced a plan to construct a port on the coast of Gaza to ease the flow of aid into the territory, and the U.S. and its allies have started to air drop aid by parachute into Gaza.

*Newsweek* has contacted the White House for comment.

**Disapproval Grows**

This policy had the support of more than half of respondents (51 percent) in [*Redfield & Wilton Strategies*](https://redfieldandwiltonstrategies.com/)' latest polling for *Newsweek,* which was conducted on March 23 to 24 with 1,500 voters, again with a 2.53 percent margin of error.

Just under a quarter (23 percent) "strongly" backed the plan, which was only opposed by 16 percent, but the policy hasn't increased voters' positive opinion of Biden's handling of the Gaza crisis.

Nearly half (44 percent) of American voters said U.S. efforts to get humanitarian aid into the Hamas-controlled territory hadn't changed their opinion of how Biden was handling the crisis.

Overall, last month's survey saw Biden's approval rating on Israel slump from plus 6 in December to –9 points. This was a result of 39 percent disapproving and only 30 percent approving. Among them, more than a fifth (22 percent) strongly disapproved.

Meanwhile, when asked about Biden's role in the humanitarian situation in Gaza, 22 percent said that the president was significantly responsible, 23 percent said "fairly" responsible and 21 percent said he was "somewhat responsible."

Among all voters, 24 percent said Hamas was most to blame for the territory's humanitarian situation.

**Gen Z and Millennials Voice Anger**

More tellingly, nearly a quarter (23 percent) of Generation Z voters (born between 1997 and 2012) held Biden most responsible for the humanitarian situation. This is much higher than the 8 percent of that generation who blamed Hamas, while 12 percent said Netanyahu and 10 percent said the IDF were the most responsible.

Over a fifth (22 percent) of millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996) said Biden was most to blame, compared with only 15 percent who blamed Hamas. This was also higher than the 13 percent and 14 percent who held as mostly responsible, Netanyahu and the IDF, respectively.

"The problem is most voters, particularly among the among the youth and among minorities...are very divided on the current conflict right now," Osamah F. Khalil, a U.S. foreign relations and Middle East expert, told *Newsweek*. "What they see this as at a minimum an issue of complicity—that the Biden administration is complicit in what's now been described as a genocide.

"He appears to be avoiding college campuses. We haven't seen much of [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kamala-harris?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), the vice president, either," he said.

The U.S. has blocked different ceasefire resolutions at the Security Council, but abstained from the most recent one on March 25. Israel has argued the resolution encourages Hamas to use international pressure to achieve a ceasefire without freeing the captives.

Meanwhile, Biden has stepped up his criticism of Israel's actions, which included saying Netanyahu "must pay more attention to the innocent lives being lost."

**'Public Hand-Wringing'**

On Thursday, a White House readout of a call with Netanyahu following drone strikes [*that killed seven people working for the World Central Kitchen (WCK)*](https://www.newsweek.com/israel-pressed-killing-world-central-kitchen-convoy-1886264?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) said continued U.S. support depends on Israel's immediate new steps in Gaza, and that the deaths of the humanitarian workers was "unacceptable."

But even if Biden's patience with Netanyahu is reportedly running out, it doesn't appear to be playing well with American voters.

"The public hand-wringing versus the actual demonstrative support for Netanyahu's government, politically, diplomatically, militarily is going to be difficult for Biden," said Khalil, history professor at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

"It would be very difficult for him to explain that to the base and energize the base to come out in November," he added.

"It's about this the rhetoric versus reality and the belief that I think among many of the [*Democratic Party*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democratic-party?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) base that that the Biden administration is absolutely hand in glove with what the Israelis are doing and what Netanyahu is doing."

In a sign that [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) may be worried about how the Israel issue might impact the presidential election, especially after more than 100,000 voters at the Michigan primary pledged "uncommitted" to protest Biden's policies toward Israel in a state that he won by 154,000 votes in 2020.

But Thomas Gift, founding director of the Centre on U.S. ***Politics*** at University College London, said that while Israel poses challenges for Biden, especially where a few thousand votes in swing states could tip the outcome, "it's not an especially salient issue" for voters.

"That pales in comparison to issues like immigration, inflation and the economy in general, all of which command double-digit percentages of voter attention," he told *Newsweek.* "When Americans go to the ballot box in November, their main concern will be kitchen-table issues affecting their lives at home."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2371673/joe-bidens-approval-rating-fallen-israel.jpg)

**Graphic**

Joe Biden’s Approval Rating Fallen Israel

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